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# Twa: A Masque

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TWA: A MASQUE

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Fine Arts

in

The Department of English

by

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M.A., Miami University, 2010

May 2014

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## ABSTRACT

Twa: A Masque is a collection of poems arranged in five impossible plays, subsumed under one general dramatic architecture. The work plays with the tradition of balladic variation, locating in the violence and strangeness of murder ballads and other aspects of the folk base an opportunity to explore themes of gender, identity, and trauma, and to expand the performative potential for non-linear narrative voices inside narrative poetry. This project re-versions archetypal characters and storylines and synthesizes multiple registers of language against the backdrop of a necropastoral fantasyland. Twa: A Masque doubles and mis-takes poetry for theater, archaism for neologism, and blood for song, reviving the antiquated form of the masque to accommodate its formal and generic innovations, the domains of which include lyric and narrative poetics, song, soliloquy, stage direction, and dialogue.

SECTION  
1 SORe cORAL LOVE

## Dramatis Personae

Aginny	<i>big sister</i>
Ginny	<i>little sister</i>
Prince	<i>first love, worst love</i>
Ouija Board	<i>a confidante</i>

## Ouija Board

*A game of chess. Ginny and Aginny play the board.*

*Aginny*

My name is ~~Ginny~~ Aginny STOP I'm contacting you from the underwhirl  
STOP We are double-tongued and our hearts yearn twoly THIS ISN'T  
FUNNY ISN'T FAIR, MAID I stood on the edge of the letter I carved out  
an A in my chest and the blood stuck SHUT UP on the knife broke in my  
sad bathtub scum WASH ME PLEASE ME LAY ME DOWN PRETTY He  
held my head under, hardpalmed my downy: I bobbed and blew nursery  
bubbles into his thighs, and when our tongues broke, hearts fell out.

*Flashback*

The pool feels wicked cool, moonwatch ticks slowing everything in silver  
drips YOU CALLED ME, LOVE shadows crawl the walls the black trees  
menace pastoral happy fucking SPLISH SPLASH dreamy darker slips into  
my creepy closes. Stars wrinkle placid night, alight above aglow beneath  
but in the middle darkness enters and exits and sun, that corner watcher,  
focuses a stare: Oh here she comes, the white queen, the sister blood: the  
dried blood scab I picked I ate

*Ginny (a shiny faux-marble queen zigzags across the tiles)*

HELLO Apollo, your horses clatter my teeth as Dawn rises PLASTICINE  
on my freshly manicured astroturf lashes. Father loved me better, water can  
always lingered longer at my petals. Now Prince in luxury velvet and short  
mincing steps raises his slight brow to me, in my goodliness CHUBBY  
CHECKED CHERUB Locker back slams spit into my neck, canines  
nipping JUST A TASTE o my blood-red ruby lisp: I am played to wait. All  
ladies know suitors TOSS THE TRASHY but my fingernail beds are never  
rumpled. A bevy of posies plucked from the levee: He loves me—

*Aginny*

NOT I'm angled for the most flatter, my bosom heaving its siren. Men are  
pied by its flesh song, promise lands a veil drop. My heady hips swirl  
around him my eyes darken to kohl and DUMBTHING he's MINE Shall I  
draw you a bubble? *Ginny tosses her mane and snorts; Planchette steps on  
sister's large feet and waltzes the room* P R I N C E C H O S E H E R She's  
glowing and I'm falling, room collapsing, drained of color, rinsing white,  
falling through layers of earth to molten core GINNY glowing as the sun as  
mine slows to concrete. My hurt weighs so heavy. The nonchalant smile,  
her flashbulbs are blinding and I hate her GOODBYE HER I'll rip her  
cheap pageant crown and paint myself in her sunfunk TEAR THE SASH of  
her innocence, Mephisto, take her for yours but give him me, bid him love  
me HELL LOVE YOU KILL ER You'll eat her heart out. Signed, my  
Stigmata



## Twa Sisters

Flowered bonie, exactly alike and without any difference. How did he choose her? Answer—No dew fell upon her.

## Nocturne

*What a sweet tart* he'd murmur. And she was. And for the sailors. And in the water. And on the land. Where the bead of her black eyes became her, where his fingers trailed into her downy dark. No pretends. In the nighttime, in the water. While little sister slept nestled in bed, he'd take her, Aginny, plucked from the bevy, away from watches, the deceit the fall the flight the spring to the water. He'd hold her under, helpless vague bobbing, lovely long neck near broken, and she'd face him quivering, long slender and *deliciously*ate, and she'd see herself in his eyes, in the water:

In the water where the fishes swim. Around her knees, skirt of sea green tucked up as her lustrous hair. Grown from the see, long and fair downy. Lone eyes locked in the gaze. A thought stirs her tender foot in the water, a tremble at her breast double rose aye the redder. Worship in his soft light : *Hither and thither, what I wood for your eyes.*

And she'd drink up milk from the water. And she'd eat up his pearls. But his pearls, only words, became air, empty air : drove the wedge in. And she landed so ashy where she'd wade, wanting, in the water.

Aginny

Cool and louche. Sugaring off one day hurting  
toward the next. Dissipated spoon, slotted in  
absentia, bubbles up milky over the rinse, flute  
songs piped in milky sheets. The telephone peals  
through the clouds; she jiggers off the ring. Drops it  
in feathery tulips blooming open her legs.

*(she sighs)*

## Aginny's Song

He was my man, but he was doin' me        wrong

## Ginny's Song

*(fetching water from the well)*

Wash me and comb me  
Lay me down softly  
On the drear bank  
That I may look prettily  
As someone pass on

Tender my buttons: Breeches or trousers, whatever  
you please, sir. Bring me a pocket of your own  
disease, sir. Tease me a tether or loose me foreverie  
wind sweat'ring the hawthorn trees, leaves downy  
southing the very last floor. *Or* tied to the rag tree.  
Ground cover creeping in from the fringe. You  
dashed out the kitten's thoughts with a stone. Wash  
me and comb me; I'll never alone. I bleached out  
the smell of seaweed in the bedpan; I washed your  
sheets with vinegar tears. I know not whence from  
nothing came.

## Prince's Song

knives and rings and lawds and things  
slide up to you real, nice  
sticky-like

I have no time for papers, give it to me straight. I AM SO IN  
LOVE WITH THIS. Woman? O, it makes me wanna. She.  
Corrals my floating particles. We as a unit move through the  
glosses and straps to knives and ringing. This is my song.

Got a light?  
To cathect your dark parts, my little swimmer's ear. Got a  
wayward icky bod needs licking. Click yr boots together.  
Kick the runoff. Drunk the moonlight, in glasses, already?  
Tickle me sully! Tessellate my tonguing desire, insecurity.  
Smoke a buncha. Topple the zip, breathing in hurdles. This is  
haply now.

My heart cup fulled me  
up! I'm a little around  
the edges. A little blown  
back from your hawking. WRITTEN IN YR MOUTH  
,blood chop,  
is less, bears little.

Aginny on the Ouija Board

*Each night I ask W H E N why must I be a S H E  
why must she be a brighter S H I N E S even the  
sun sees her and weeps S H E L L hide in the sea  
and the dirt when it sees me S N U F F I'll eat her  
light O U T I'll swallow her hole Y O U R L  
I G H T I know I am*

Prince + Ginny + Aginny

Prince: I love you so rarely, but how do you love me? Wait, let me.  
Count. Let me, count the waist. The twenty odd rings.

Aginny: *As the moon love the star; as the salt love the ground; as the  
wound love the fly; as the thorn love the flesh; as the bubble  
love the blood.*

Prince: I love you so rarely, but how do you love me?

Ginny: As a mite upon the land, my love

Prince: And if an earthquake swallowed you?

Ginny: In a doorway I'd withstand, my love

Prince: And if I throw you in the sea?

Ginny: With my love I'd build a boat of cream and paddle us  
Away, my love

Prince: The bottom'd break, I'd wish it so—

Ginny: We'd both drown in excess of love

—my Love!



## Skipping Song

*(Jumping rope; fuming)*

Say, say, my play-  
Mate, say, say, my enemy  
My little angry bangry  
Fiddlehead

My name is nickel  
I pomp and poodle, you

Work your hoodoo  
Do what? You do,  
Bubblegum bubble blown  
In a dish, how many  
Pieces smell like f—

Ginny + Aginny Play the Board

Ouija t'witcha turn the dee: board cries foully  
outside the shaded landscape. *Who we want?* Her  
itching hand. PRIN *a devil?* C *I don't think, I*  
*don't think you never—just play something* E  
CHO *dumbthing thisn't funny* SE H *something,*  
*here let me* ER *stutterer, spell it out*

PRINCECHOSEHER

—*I think I one*

—*Did not*

—*Did two*  
*(is me)*

Aubade (Prince's Song)

*(Prince smoking a cigarette and Aginny underycovers. The sun glares in the windowpanes.)*

Oh no  
I warmed you 'bout this:

(In the ceiling, mirror  
Of our doubled horizon)

What moonlight's tricky fingers bathed,  
Sunlight cauterizes

It's all I can do to drag you dry  
from me here.

O/ur exit, sans dénouement,  
No longer bon  
-ded in shadow lines

SECTION  
2 S'NUFF

## Dramatis Personae

Aginny	<i>a familiar magick</i>
Ginny	<i>alighting death's candling flame</i>
Earth	<i>a-cravin' a daughter</i>
Ravens	<i>magick familiars</i>
Ouija Board	<i>a glass for the looking</i>
	<i>a textual healing</i>

*Ravens circle above a well. Ginny's body stench wafts up. Ravens gather in the shards of a sparkling mirror-tree.*

Sister cray-cray craven plunged you downer, downy dearie! Steep in yr own 17ozenge17. We'll stir the waters to descry your nowhereafter. *Ravens drop carrion feathers black plastic garbage bags in the water. Albumen & yolk splatter the well walls. They cut out a dragonfly's tongue and add water hemlock. They circle the well, flapping and yawping and baring their claws, zinc sky streaked with bloody contrails.* SISTERS TWA AND TREACH'RY DOUBLE LANGUAGE LOST IN MORTEM RUBBLE LECHE RE-BOUND IN THE NETHER BODY LOST IN CHANTY AETHER DEVIL FIND YOU, HELL DEVOUR LET THE SANG & EAU DE FLOWER *Ravens cackle.* What shall we weird her? Little one, hell give you stagefright; WELL GIVE YOU ICE-BLOOD. The devil bid to win u mount the platform & strip u: WELL BATHE YOU IN A DIZZY CHANT AND CLOTHE YOU IN A FAIR CUT OF THE JIBBERISH TONGUE. WELL RÊVE YOU UP ATHIRST FOR ICHOR. US, WELL DRINK THE REST. WELL GIVE YOU TEETH TO BITE OUT WORDS; WELL STEEP YR SONG IN BRINY BONES AND KEEP IT LIVE IN MARROW HOLES. *Storm of Ravens clutter the well-hole, flapping their wings and cawing* LET THESE SINK IN YOUR WATERY GRAVE & TELL YOUR HOLE TALE *Ravens fly into the 17ozen and drop on the perimeter of the other side.*

## Aginny's Dream

A house erected on, faces, the earth, a welt—on the skin patched whole. Hole in the flore, board a gape o' well, pool for the tears torn from the dirt. A thousand mouths. Even the rocks cry out *lonely*: Mother, earth demands a daughter, a pretty fledgling fille. It is a large house, emptied of daytime, enclosed by lush, always just. Rained. Keeping you inside. Where every the other one else? Find a grand père shriveling in the basement: he is dead and you know but friendly. Death comes to collect him again. A' night, filled people: silly girl, afraidest of your own shadow!

A house dissevered, cracks disclose and grow a sinkhole burped and swallowed gulp the house and all the wood. Tears in the satiny puckers and starched linen drawers, pulled to the dirty as culled to core. Greedy earth open her jaws wider to swallows, whiter & tunnels the caverns, plumbed rank on boys and girls twisting inside their praises protracting a recoil disgusting. On the terror. Opens wider to devour her choicest daughter. A flail song sung, earth humming pulls closer in a sweetly, a malison lullaby:

Oh come home to me, dear Aginny  
Oh stay at home with me,  
And the very best cock in all the roost  
For your own supper shall be.

*(Awake, Aginny! Peer into the well and see her drowning)*

A house trap for all the skittering fingers. A run in stalking feet won't lose your trail ever, downward. Always sink. Kitchen floor distends its tile jaws, bath laugh glistens its fillings overbrimming its porcelain teeth and in the bed, room edges felled away in heavy, sudden strokes. The holeway dematerializing its paper walls into nothing then the hole house shuddering closed, the ground collecting its jowls and pursing its lips around a final greedy gulp and, holy satisfied, belches smooth silky wisps of grass and velvet moss over the mounds of its face, a body interred unwillingly stifled and buried so quietly, decomposed forgotten in the backyard.

*(Aginny awakens for/to the really)*

## Libido/Destrudo

Mother, Earth take this, my blood, and that, my unwilling vassal, from all other ordinary. Let her blood/ enliven your dusty cheeks & take her springtime for your wintry. Arms. Blunt her maiden head on your craggy & I'll nestle a body small into your flesh. Feast on her moldering corps and drink her up alimantal & I'll spread thick the night with odorous love.

Permit me this—take her for me—and in our switching hour, I'll lead him to my pitchy bed, enseamed with sister flesh, and praise you in our honeying. Take her from me: Bless this my fallen body—Arise!



Aginny on the Ouija Board

*1 if I land for 2 sea FOR I saw my death, a body  
inearthed Y OU I am my body, my body my HE  
R we shall not dissever in death, for S HE ...is a  
body, a SONG but a body, any body as offering  
to earth CRY PT I'll bury and bind her, but how  
CO N I'll lure her with songs and S C RIPT a  
new end*

A Recipe for {to Prolong Life}

*(Aginny, high prescience refracting through stacks of teetering glass bottles, thaws an icy heart and folds in dark, a hissing and glistening chef-d'oeuvre. When the hex is complete, she overturns her pot and scalds the ground. The earth groans as the Ravens caw overhead.)*

u sure u rite from skeleton  
limbs occlude and darken'd on  
21ozen trim in candling light  
shorn and reaped with fleshy knife

till in dirt with devilish horn  
salt the earth with peppercorn

velvet drowned in silver spoon  
darkness thrashed from raven's feather  
eglantine rip in grainy moon  
swallow, bleach and lace together

water earth and fire-bind  
tongue song burn and devil blind (cauterize)  
slip'ry mouth cut and 21ozeng  
sacrifice for me conscripted

## Aginny's Song

*(Holding tightly handed and skipping down a rocky path)*

Down to the well, Ginny  
Down the well, Ginny  
Down so well, Ginny  
Oopsie down you go

Whistle bird o'clock, chimes the walls. *Bend over, I can't see the sun.* She wobbles as. Ginny, let your hair roll down. I can't see the stars hang down and cry. And they cry, *don't you feel like?*

Comin' round  
the back/bend\_own, *I can't seethes\_undressing.* Down to skin, chase tongues, smooth and newed, tipple over bony protrusions.

Paddle in the water, Ginny  
Piddly in the water, Ginny  
Puddle in the water, Ginny  
Oopsie drown you go

(Moonlight)

The sun slid lower in the dirt.  
So hot and red it seemed to me.  
Her eyes kissed mine  
in the double silence  
of the water and the darkening.

I closed my eyes  
her face bobbed  
I pushed it down, her  
hot blue fat body fought  
in the ink

She sang to me:

Sister, reach your hand! I'll make you arrow half my land

I sang to her:

Sister, dearest, with my hands, I'll rain arrows o'er all the land

She sang to me:

Sister, take my gown and quicken dredge me to the ground

I sang to her:

Kisser, bye the soggy ground, hold fast the bottom raucous kisses drowned

She sang to me:

Sister, twin'd me o' the make! If I die then you'll kill you two

She sang to me:

Sister, reach me but a glove and take yourself the Prince's love

I sang to her:

Sinker, hope for hand nor glove, the Prince'd better be my love. I'll take you and I'll take him, too.

I sang:

It was moonlight, moonlight, in the water. Moonlight shown my face on hers (in the water). Moonlight melt my body to his (in the water). Her body 'come mine (in the water)

Aye you swittert, sink and swim  
Put out and put out  
The light!

*(Ginny sinks)*

Hard to see and canna tell. Hush. Clutch hard on  
moonlight's fingers, what might be. Sullen  
swimmer in the gravel, eyes and nose and buttocks  
cut and weeping blood. Washed well in the dirty.  
Flies in the buttermilk sing, *I'll get another one  
prettier* then you can tell me where.

Ask a way:

On the Ouija Board

*Who's there ART Who are you I FIX I break IF  
ICE BREAKS I break WHATS REAL  
I'm real NOT I am NOT REAL Who am I*

GONNY

## Blessing of Ravens

*(crowding from above, flock of ravens circling well)*

Conspiracy of Ravens, Unkindness of Ravens, Constable of Ravens: What shall we weird her?

Unkindness of Ravens: Tender is the fast and sultry!

Constable of Ravens: Well give her a selfsong sharp as glace

Conspiracy of Ravens: Well give her a heroine 27ozenge27 et pur ring

Unkindness of Ravens: Well give her ahead ful singing

Constable of Ravens: Well give her a glassbone full-throated et hollow

Conspiracy of Ravens: Well give her a fair cut of the jibberish tongue

Constable of Ravens: She's gone to graveland now to meet its devilish yeoman. She'll nary make it out, as no one do.

Unkindness of Ravens: Such a young blood with so much song in her

Conspiracy of Ravens: Couldn't or shouldn't we rescinderella?

Constable of Ravens: Timestamped and labeled? Or expiration dated?

Unkindness of Ravens: Hardly, sprinkly—more ingredients!

Conspiracy of Ravens: Well give her stagefright, immobilizer

Unkindness of Ravens: Well give her a lip, sticky sweetie, a wee bird bonnie

Constable of Ravens: Well give her twisted tongue and saucy sassships

Unkindness of Ravens: Thus begins the haply hereafter



Aginny on the Ouija Board

*He loves me AYE He loves me not AR He loves  
me YEA He loves me RAG That old Vitruvian  
rag, he loves me O How does he love me ONE  
love Y me EARL p-earl ATE pearls, I did I'm  
a good R a good HEL a good her LEATHER  
a good SON no a good girl G but I'm A—*

SECTION  
3 GINNY + THE FAUSE KNIGHT

Dramatis Personae

*(in Graveland)*

Ginny	<i>dead</i>
The Fause Knight	<i>the devil</i>

## Graveland

*Who's owed a ship/ ate the ship*

*Ginny*

Enter the Faustus Knight, my devilish captain WHERE ARE YOU GONE, LITTLE BIRD your cloven foot stamps me RIDDLING sizzling and freezed up the spine INNOCENT I am become the lambs all for slaughter, white fleece lined up mutantly WHITER THEN Your face scrunches and cream flows out JIZZLE Snow covers the landscape, frozen unfrozen, gaze and eyes turned stony. I look out deadly now. WET IS Dearest, she's afiring squadron smiles: then Aginny, you took my hands and binded me faster HIGHER THAN TREES my sister Icarus, marrying up & up, climed high on waxen wings. We waited till flesh dropped from me, and well burrowed DEEPER and I, thrust into this hell hole, wax sealing Fate's eyelids shut DRIP DRIP Awash in gravel, the boatman pecks my eyes SHARPER Even the birds sing my sister's treason. The crows eat my flesh rot, my seems fray and the golden thread of my life pulls taut: on its tightrope we meet and lock in the infernal embrace DISTANCTLY The Prince's wet diaper sobs from beyond sound LOUDER I know it, faintly I hear my sands expiring HISSSSS Your warm hand slips inslide the mountains SWEET CREAM HONEY CREAM Through the rivers through woods and the weeds and the dogs and the fur, clouds of fur, piles and piles of woolly field cotton I CAN'T RUN fast enough I CAN'T RUN at all, your coal-hot tongue locked to my netherworld HOT CROSS FERVOR we fall through the silks and the satins the dressings and gauzes we land in THIS BROKEN NECK ROMANCE for you, Smyrna, my sin agog, my remnant scrap, untouched by the second death

Why are ye gaun, my darling young one? breathed on  
a whimper. Frozen dared not-breath. *I'm gone to the scule* and she  
stood and she stood and 'twas  
well, that. Alone then, flinty.

Wintry thick as tails fingers snaked shoulders. The  
sack releases with a pull. –*See what's inside?*

f

a

u

s

Sssprung from the sack. Pages flutter atremble o'  
the unzip. *Pages in there*. Cut from the same cloth  
indifferent cloth cut in the fabric. Shiver drops on  
the ink.

Lest the da-  
ring darling  
da-Rest/  
at first blush  
SHE  
w/STANDS.

*What's that? On your back on your side in your  
arms Only lonely. Loam fertile, blank brimming  
with darknesses. Snags of it under bones not  
unraveled. Plucked through by bones. Mires be,hold  
the rot. Still life in her arms her legs and between.  
He plucks a feel, her 'tit mort nature more still.  
Shakes a little life in.*

and she stood and she stood and she stood



*Who's owed a  
ship*

*ate the ship*

in linen cambric unstichèd wool worsted as velvet  
ears worsted then manila velveteen tulles the trigger  
twilled, voiled, 36ozeng, puckered, poured into a  
cire, a rayon fill to the touch. Piles plush liquid  
36 oze; mountainous organza minkies a mesh;  
ripstop. He pulls the zip of the white cotton lawn.  
Teeth split: *I got it from my mama.* 36ozenge3636ad  
like under oath in the white shadow, of the gutter.

The shot, a' monie  
A' the blue ones  
Stedfaster ones placid lak of  
                    of the nothing-much  
A dieu

I wiss you under the paper tree bent  
down among the shades battened own, hard rubris  
& golden 38ozeng thorne salved inside *and a good*  
*lad under* me, You, in, I outside YES You in, I  
outside, yes, Heaven in You for the lad too break in  
the brine *in your apple-bodied fall*

I wiss you

sea you

Paper tail, sea legs wrapped around a middle  
so **small of** the road. Middaylaway in the  
journey in the middle midtime in upon the  
midway just halfway amid the. Just half over.  
Glassy eyes on the ice-road yonder well off  
your head. *Go to tell.*

SECTION  
4 REGINASIS

## Dramatis Personae

Ginny	corpse
Aginny	murderesse
Miller	enterprising manufacturie
Oublietta	lavinian
Barber	barbarous
Prince	love-object
Ravens	antidoting, eyewitnesses
Ouija Board	juste porte ende

## The Mill

*Workshop, strewn with flesh ribbons.*

### *Oublietta*

Glorious putrefaction! We the lucky maggots hum praises to your commissary flesh. You, my witching Christabel, elected to die, already dead become bloodless sacrifice: His knife was poised above me, my back wriggling against the stone CUT TO YOU horns caught in the mucky briar, my whipping body, my green lamb. The stub of my filed melon tongue hisses your hymns and we your ladies flicker candlelighting about you, your odorous incense, your yellow canker flower. We unswaddle your bones of their fleshcloth.

### *Miller*

*Enter Miller.* DAUGHTER O DAUGHTER SO LOWELY I hear your *sang* throb for me. Oublietta, my forgetting hole, my sweet Philomela, quails from me. LET YOUR BLOOD SONG SING my still little one *The knife flashes. Oublietta's lips part and darkness pours out. A stream of dirty light shines down on Ginny's corpse, laid out on silver.* Miraculous demesne! ACRE OF PLEASURES for my thirsty fingers! *A choke of powdered latex* DEAREST ANIMAL I scalpel your sweetest incision and peel back your layers: the velvet, the white fat, and flesh marble, to quartz skeleton. I crack apart your vertebra and suck out AMBROSIA YOU TASTE LIKE the pickled dawn. I am coated in your juices YOU GIVE UP SO WILLINGLY I am anointed in blood and your waters. Your joints release from their sockets, bent to my will, AND IT IS GOOD I hammer your fingers, unspool your hair AND IT IS GOOD your ribcage splinters and I clutch at your heart squelches blood out GOOD I take your rib and spit on the dirt floor. I lie down with you. Your 43ozeng body become instrument in my fiddling hands: I press my lips to your f—holes and you come ALIVE AND I SAW IT WAS GOOD



*Ginny (a fiddle)*

I AM REBORN A NIGHTINGALE/ I AM REBORN A VIOLINCE SONG

The water could not swallow me, nor devil slake me; the Miller cannot consume me. MY SONG CANNOT DIE My weak flesh tore apart as regenesis: a barbarous instrument of my lumber bones screeches my catgut songs. His breath quickened my—pulse? My heart was carved out from a drone metronome. MY SONG BECOME DEADLY IN MY HOLLOWÈD BODY I sing out from the void that yawns in my chest-hole. *Ginny shrieks in f-sharp M. Fireworks of glass shattering. Feathers explode as birds burst. The Miller's goggles shatter, then his eyeballs, then his erect cock.*

*Oublietta*

*Emerging from her forgetting hole, Oublietta spits and hums and dances Inanna, the warrior: brazen lady, fair and bonie! Let your razor song restitch my amputee langue to praise, praise your terribility. Let my broke body carry yours beyond pleasure: let me ring out the death call. The wedding bells toll Oublietta dips her fingers in her father's blood and writes on the wall* GIRLS SAY GIRLS SAY

VENGEANCE!

## The Miller's Song + The Miller's Daughter

Ground split: *Who will help me plant my seed?* Not a chance,  
dog breath, she purred. Strewn so sadly in a hand sad well.  
And the seed grew sickly. Onan, off with their heads! *And*  
*who will help me grind my wheat?* NO takers : tied up so  
neatly. Finger racks through the threshing. *And I will* Miller  
mouthed. Through the firry cornered woodlands to the mill  
*who will* who's an easy bake? No BODY. Dragged home  
like a sack of potash, what hour was, left with a long and  
listless boy in lazy mood : but not a boy and hardly lazy. A  
half-sly man and his freshly flowered daughter sent her  
tripping down to well : fetching pall of water & *I'll help you*  
*eat it* You would, and would not, little one!

Too too young spoke large of brittle flowers  
To t/ouch a neck so warm and whit  
In the creased rosy folded hours  
Hardly swallowed in the bit

*Who will help me?* Light/ly echoed off the walls,  
well. *Not I* the naughty snorting daughter. Miller  
cocked his head said *stick a finger in* drop a bucket  
down. Twitch my witching stick. To the sullen pool  
below. Sometimes she sank sometimes she switched.  
*Whatsit?* Dizzy backwards glimpse fore(to)tell the  
depths *Something fishy*

Plop!

*(a vortex of wingssound)*

## Hex of Ravens

Conspiracy, Constable, Unkindness of Ravens: (*Watch the body bounce in water. Watch from bird-eye view. Watch, the ravens, on the tree. Watcha wanting, waiting lover?*)

Conspiracy of Ravens: (*Take the body/ and the blood*) Gathering, rounder. Basin darkens bloody. Body expands—w/ air? Puff. *y u leftover? y u lookin/ so tasty?*

Constable of Ravens:

A Little bloated: Little tender. Little sad. A  
Little littled up for the take. Poor Little!  
Swimming in your own 47ozenge47, dirty  
Little! Tunnel stank. Sniff a rotten well-  
bottomed Little

Unkindness, Conspiracy of Ravens: (*peck and slobber drips on soaking body*)

Ginny: (*Fallow dead doe-eyes:*  
*open*)  
*(canna see)*

Conspiracy of Ravens: (*Whistles in the wind: Miller coming o'er the hill*) Does it hert? Is it beatin? What a beauty! Beady boated body, bored the skin plank—we no who. Is he coming, now? She'll come, to.

Unkindness of Ravens:

So turn the wind'n clutch  
the knife. Take her clothes  
off & she'll heel.

If she don't

Well et her up  
It's only a gull  
It's only a gull-sick swan

Ravens:

Look the skin slit  
Look the deadeyez  
Look the blood up  
Look the cream slip  
Look the gowd'en  
CAW

Ravens: *(licky lips & flies away)*

Ginny on the Ouija Board

WHAT *is there* CA *birds on the tree* CAN  
they saw NA *they see me* BE *not-be* C *well*  
HANGED *well-drowned* MUN *must I live*  
BE T *better, must I sing* OLD *that song*

O

Ginny: *(floating facedownassup in the water/ chambered music)*

who can tell                      o                      you lo ave me  
rip ple                      s                      if                      e  
as                      coming down                      dripping  
e                      are                      cats&dogs                      hard ly  
g rain trick                      sickle  
les soleil's                      O                      pen  
or snowflakes                      hell                      up  
50ozen  
f                      catch                      twinned                      birth  
A l                      one                      O                      né                      from                      life  
at                      t o                      a fails ing  
catch                      son g

Aginny on the Ouija Board

*[Merrily, merrily] (back on land) (skipping home)*

gone away, furre away, hi ho! (*joyously*) who  
lacks to swim? (*planchette budgeless*) who's a  
something fishy? (*rien*) who's a-flirting with the  
mermaids? Oh, whose the fair rest? **THE**  
**SON** a son!? A son! A two for one! **G LIV**  
she'll never birth it now **ES I N** easy, 'twas,  
though hardly pleasurable, for I'm a-dripping  
**HE** yes, he's mine now. Not the son but the  
father **R BOD** he'll never know, I'll never tell,  
how she went tripsy down the well **Y** because  
now all the power as mine

*(planchette twitches furiously)*

**ELLE SE DÉ PENSE**

she's spent or worse

unthinkable



## A Bridle Aginny

Ravens: She gone down well, Ginny!  
Thus gelds the lily  
Thus gilds the Lilith

Aginny: If I have my bedding bower Eros and my string  
We'll climb a tower gilded gold with steps of ivory

Ravens: We'll settle neither gold nor bane  
Bets just to watch the bodies play  
out

Aginny: *(smoothing her hair, smoothing her gown)*

Prince: *(entering stage left)* What happens? Who noise? A Ginny?

Aginny: *(slipping icy fingers around his arms)* Just the prattling pussy  
birds, never no mind, dearest

Ravens: *(preening)*

Aginny: Why, have you seen her? *(fingering the penknife in her  
pocket, leant herself against a fence, puckering)*

Prince: Girls I love in the merry, best of all. Sueurly there's time for  
a quixodixie dip?

Aginny: Prince, I'd love to in the marry. Shall we? I wanna.

Prince: Soeurly!

Wood, She Winna

*(he wood her butt; he wood her ben; he wood her in the ha)*

Lights off, lights off. Pull off, pull off. Pull off, pull off. *Deliver unto me your middle small your cavernous jewels strip down catch hold you'll be my seventh.* Wide in, wide in. Lie there, lie there, I shanna, I winna.

## The Miller + the Barber Butcher

Dead lovely, lady lips silvry and Fished out of water: a mouth 32 *idées* wide. *Wanna et fisheyes you*. Her lips are glossy. Like real metallic. She was last scene of the catching act. Left gaping, words foaming in the stroke of her throat. Last scene of an ivory seizure. Last scene a livery, and she is *dumb*. Eyes blanking open. She's dead; She's alive. She's dead, done, dead it, she died, Jesus! she's this. This isis.

Put to ground in water, Body cold and sopping: boiled till flesh drops rosy topsy, hung up on hymz, upsy daisies. Ankles dangled from a hook, flayed and meaty. Set her mind below. Carved a heart out. Opened a tear and let out the water.

Miller:

**SO RENT THE LIMBS FROM HER**

**SEXY BABY BODY**

**& HOLD<sub>HER</sub>STILL**

**!**

Miller: *to the Barber*

Disarticulate her, and she'll sing

*(Ginny: at the Barbershop)*

Pole barbered bloody stitched up white. Let  
blood runnels. How much gets cut? Off with her.  
Occam divides the simplest, multiplicities with a  
red swish. He takes out the tincture. She takes it  
phlegmatically. She takes it.

Miller:

She'll be back. And I'll snap. And I'll take down those digits. And I'll

and laugh!

**WATCH HER DIDDLE HER FIDDLE**

**WHEN I'M DONE WITH HER**

## Work Song

Toe bone disconnected from heel bone disconnected from foot bone  
disconnected from ankle bone disconnected from foot bone disconnected from  
leg bone disconnected from knee bone disconnected from leg bone  
disconnected from hip bone disconnected from spine bone disconnected from  
breastbone disconnected from collarbone disconnected from shoulder bone  
disconnected from arm bone disconnected from wrist bone disconnected from  
hand bone disconnected from finger bone disconnected from hand bone  
disconnected from wrist bone disconnected from arm bone disconnected from  
shoulder bone disconnected from neck bone disconnected from chin bone  
disconnected from nose bone disconnected from head bone

*(Key change)*

Dumb bones, dumb bones gonna sing a song  
Disconnect them bones, them dry bones  
Now hear the word

Split down the middle. Set down in the valley, and behold, there were very many, and lo, they were very. Stewed till flesh fell, brokebones brined from brittle. With her eye glasses, he viewed the body: a breastbone clamped; cut finger bones fret; stand her legs and bowed her arms. He fingered veins of her roughcut neck so blew, picked her severed tongue so rough (unto the miller it spake enough). Her shins kept time as he fiddled out a rhyme:

Treble string: *The prince I love's become the king*  
Second string: *My sister's now his bloody queen*  
Strings all three: *Bitch killed me-ee*

Play it aginny, Ginny!

SECTION  
5 BABYLON



## Dramatis Personae

Ginny	always a fiddling
Aginny	blushing bridal
Cann, Ibal	blood brothers
Prince	so well groomed
Miller	an uninvited guest
Wedding guests	spectators
Ravens	spectators

## Wedding Hall

*Coronation. Aginny, veiled, begins her long walk. Her white sleeves trail behind and buckles gleam up her back. The Prince waits in a gimp suit. Violin plays uneasily.*

*Aginny*

It is very nearly here. I see the glitter, far off, in my rhinestone crown—the future lit up a glittering bijouterie where I lay down my velveteen flesh for fat emerald babies uncut and precocious, open my diamanté knees for you so diamonds pour out; where I'll be burned completely up to my radiation beauty, borne out of plastic and crystal and become luxuriant dear, preciously darling. *Ginny squawks.* YOU MAY NOW LICK MY SUGAR SKULL Your flesh is become alchemy in my mouth. *Aginny unzips the Prince's mask. Teeth and feathers fall out.*

*Ginny (Shrieking. Bone rattle.)*

FLESH BECOME ASH IN MINE You! Milky chrysoberyl, pyrite tinsel, my gritty silica: the moon belies your 61ozeng charm but sun exposes your flimsy melted heart. The earth knows your treacheries, and your sepsis pours out my flowering gums, disease that twinned the fruit of its flesh. I am no body, mouth only SANG FOR SONG AND CREAM FOR GALL, I AM THUS UNSEXED —Cut the blood. My ghost stains your twisted sheets, your white negligée, your useless fingers. I am the stain you cannot wash out. The one the earth spat out. Even the woods uncloset your treasons, Cain, and the Earth bares its teeth for you: STRIP HER BARE AND SALT HER BONES; LET THE FLAMES LICK HER CLEAN *Enter the Fause Knight, who binds Aginny.* Yes, Virginia, there is a Satan, claws and teeth and it is my nightmare. He wants not what's between your legs but between your lips. He'll suck out your song and leave you nothing but a leaden receiver. Go, little parrot, carry a sterile song and birth its stillborn pallor eternally, for hell is deep and filled with the horrors of which YOU'LL NEVER GET TO SPEAK

*Fause knight grabs Aginny's tongue and devours, pierces her body and siphons her sang. Earthquake. Fire.*

TWA SISTERS FLOW RED EXACTLY ALIKE & WITHOUT  
ANY DIFFERENCE. HOW DID HE CHOOSE HER? ANSWER—

*Rain.*

## The Wedding

*Tumblerfuls of green champagne punch and a sandal dangles languid from her toe tips. Cigarette filters sunlight plucks the sweetest daisy from the lawn. He loves me n—sweat rolls down her inner arm sanctuary, wingless. Fingers print on glass lipstick bitten into wondrous sweet breath fog. A rumpled cavalcade processes on the lawn.*

*(Enter Miller)*

Miller: Present! A present! I present—

Prince: What now? You who?—a formally uninvited stink of fish.

Miller: —not me! I present a fiddling song for this blessé union!  
Snatched from slumber's younger brother, a sister song to evening's  
lusty serenade, a mourning song—

Prince: I command you to shut up

Aginny: *(rolls eyes)* Let him bloody, speak. Spill it, imp.

Miller: Bonie lady! Your beauty rivaled only by your solicitude!  
Nay, your solitudinous solemnity! Your sanguinary divinity—  
*(guards flank his elbows)* 'Tis an enchanted evening song. A song  
from curvèd body wrought from elemental desire, engendered on  
Hymen's tongue! *(Miller jerks)*

Aginny: *(chewing cuticles)* Just drop it anywhere.

Miller: 'Tis naught the vessel, but the gift of its song, a wedding  
song to prime the well-spring of your night love—

Aginny: Naught! Then pipe it so we may piston mechanical.

Prince: *(sighing)* one, two, one two, one two, three four

*(Ginny fiddle begins playsing):*

## Epithalamium: The Twa Brothers

Wrassle my lasso! I'LL CUT YOU Just try. You make like so deadly. What a hassle. We f/all, posie's pocketbookie full. And now you're bloody bleeding like a mother/ earth, accept this my bother. Listen to that wobble EACH AS NEEDED. Take it off! You're burning up. I'll take you up, my burden, watch the blood. Wash the blood. This is anew. Oh, brother. Take me away, slip me something a little more comfortable. Draw me a grave bath and put me to sea. Well and what can I say? Gone round the bender, full of blank, new duds, gone to beddy-bye, he'll ring. Hitched his wagon to the second star this morning, sweetheart.

Twa brothers naughty bitey. A dizzle dazzle screenfight: one-two, one-two! muscles flexed glisten in sebaceous light. Waxy teens bent sideways, inspiteways. Sweatwhipped in raindrops, bloody lashes. Cut to lineoleum & crawl in the hole. A scrum diddly: fluid swell, crotchety tangle, limbs knobby in the rough cork dermis. The delicate flowering nipplebuds, rosehead caught in briars of hair. A sticky desire l64ozenged his throat and he swallowed it, gulped down all stars and dark and honey. A salt lik seawater stream crystalline, wept down on him.

In a tussle then beat with his branches. Spangled with limbs and split down the crotch. He pulled out the knife wet and held it limplike. A grisly cream scene. Over the blink of la mort & l'amour, cut and weeping from the eyes of their raggedy head boughs. More it tended, more bled. More the gape augured; more the waters spilled and mixed with the dirt, wasteful, wasteful. Lacking. More the animals snorted. More the father disdained and mother wept. More the pretty girl drowned. Brother twisted twice the knife and said, "Empty."

*(still fiddling)*

Too too pretty boys. Prettiest boy say rare. One to the other, worse laid up. Went down and worselaid. On the ground, slippery knife sprung out: pocketa pocketa, little death. *Pinmetothewalletshit*, he said. *AndIe*, he said. *O my rich honie, blow this, land broad, and I'll killya*, he said. *Or willie diddlie by my penknife?* Buried in the backyard, hawk a hole a little larger laid his body barer. Therer. In the hole. *Stanes at my head, stanes at me feet. Stanes again upon me breast the better I'm asleep.* What dreams may come. *Wet blood, isn't it?*

*Tis. The blood of my grey*  
Hounds, me bloody grey  
Honds, it wouldn't run  
For me, then Die! bloody hounds.

Never red thusly: Not near so red!

*OuiOui*, the black bloody horse  
It would not hunt for me I hit  
From it I hid I said *it's all in*  
*The faminely* It ran redily away.

What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me, so nearly red & loud

*Blood of brother Ibal better Canna be.* Foot aship sing *I'm gane our to the sea. Nevermorebidadieu.* Return eclipsed, a day you'll never see a home-coming.

## The Ravens' Intervention

Con/stable of Ravens: (*above on launder grassy tree*)

A downy, downy, dare a down  
Hey, ho! Ibal's shade  
Canna be tholed like *so*

Constable of Ravens: (*plucking attā string*) Like that?

Ginny: (*out of tune, quiver o' strings makes a mane*)

Like yes  
Now kittle me quick

Constable of Ravens:

Oyez oyez oyez  
This telling &  
& chanted  
wobble!

Unkindness of Ravens:

From a spindly broken  
& a styxie reforged—

Conspiracy of Ravens:

A bony sewer shatter'd her chromatic *sang*  
Imprisoned in her now,  
Skinned and bonie—

Ravens: & what a song itties!

*(On stage a ship rolls in. The spring tide loads a fricative weight pushed up from the tongue. Air heavy, the teeth change directions. One already against the other.)*

Our Lady of the Dead

Ginny: ()

*My name is Ginny Aginny  
I come from the bottom of a well  
For 9 long years my heart pined  
A pain I never could tell*

Unkindness of Ravens: (*chummily*)

Her teeth I could not jaw  
Her tongue I could not sand  
I sent her fast by watery way  
Straight down to Graveland

Ginny:

*Through death and drown and misery  
To shanties I'd remand  
But I never knew what misery was  
Till I went to Graveland*

(*Ceremonious*)

Rite as citizen, unctuous ceded  
Rite as woman, forcibly bled  
Rite to lief, blushingly sacrificed

I take thee now fro'

# OUR LADY OF THE DEAD

Mister ichor, farewell you  
Walking skeletons (No lief  
But in things) Cleaved as Saxifrage  
Left yours and cleaved mine

You may now lick my sugar skull

And hang her, high, ho!



## Aginny's Revenge

Flowers fall, all fingers pointing toward, mouths  
agape love a chattering. Fiddles with her. Judge,  
judge: *Please, mister*. Send me electric; burn me,  
'cause me, I don' care. To the tune o' ninety-nine  
and ninety? Send me to the ElectriCity.

*(Aginny threw back her gown)* Oh lordy

Black wings flutter in the eaves: Oh lordy, how they  
did love a roost. *Ain't gonna tell you no stories,*  
*aye—*

*(She threw back that old .45)*

opened, *Dear Crime—* cut the blood. Cut to blood.  
Shot 'em all and every till all the sundry *sang*  
poured out.

Aginny:        *Il pleut dans mon coeur comme ils pleurent dans la ville.*

*(She shot Miller once, she shot daughter, too, she shot the Prince, shot him through and through. The angels laid them to waste. A single tear emerges in Aginny's cheek.)*

Aginny: *(to Ginny, pointing the gun)*  
Well, it's will you be a copse's wife  
Or medley into a nether life?

Ginny:        Don't you know it's your *sang*, too?

Aginny: *(cocking the gun)*  
You got no *sang* left in you.

Ginny:        All I got left is the blues.

Aginny:        Babble on! *(turns the gun and shoots herself in the hurt)*

*(Sun dapples red in the trees. Ginny rubs against a pine for the pitch. Lets out a dark holler.)*

*(Ravens fly up and up, into the blue yawn. Ginny slumps in a corner, out of tune. Gathers dusty. Years pass.)*

Fin

If the key does/ but f/it... no doubt, precious. Turned her 'round he searched no keyhole t/ here at last noon visible. S/nor lay deep. Where/ ever the key is the lock/ must be also. Discovery so small, hardly: wait until s/he's quiet, unlocked and unopened, what wonder/ ful discoveries to be lying therein/side.

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## VITA

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